

Red Tail Flyer

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April 1, 2005

Saving lives all in a day's work for Balad medics



Photo by Master Sgt. Jim Randall

A medical evacuation team transports a wounded soldier to the emergency room at the Air Force Theater Hospital. Team members shown here include (from right to left) Private 1st Class Dadrian Ellington from Dragon Evac, 141st Medical Company based in Georgia, Second Lieutenant Jim Moran, also from Dragon Evac, Private Vaghti Henderson, Emergency Dispatch, Australian detachment, Staff Sgt. Heather Ikerd, Emergency Dispatch, 332nd Air Force Theater Hospital and Sgt. Kristi Artigue, Dragon Evac.

By Master Sgt.
Jim Randall

*332nd Air Expeditionary
Wing Public Affairs*

Evacuation team members brace themselves against the rotor wash of a Blackhawk helicopter as it lands, stirring up swirling clouds of dust. The team immediately makes their

way to the chopper and hurriedly begins bringing patients into the trauma center. Within seconds, the emergency room is buzzing with activity as doctors, nurses, radiologists and medical technicians assess patients' injuries, check vital signs, administer medications and set up x-ray equipment.

This is a typical routine for

the men and women of the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, who often repeat this process several times a day at the Air Force Theater Hospital here.

The 332nd EMDG operates the hospital, a primary care clinic and a Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility to provide medical services and

treatment for U.S. and coalition forces on and around Logistics Support Area Anaconda and Balad Air Base, Iraq.

Quality medical care and speedy evacuations of wounded personnel in Iraq have helped achieve "the lowest mortality rate ever seen in modern warfare," according to Deputy Defense Secretary Paul D. Wolfowitz at a January Tricare conference in Washington.

To provide high-quality medical care, the hospital boasts a staff of surgeons trained in more than 20 different specialties. Army combat medics and evacuation teams make sure that patients get treated as quickly as possible.

"Most of our patients are U.S. military and Iraqi army, national guard and police," said Col. Chuck Hardin, 332 EMDG commander.

Medics at the 332 EMDG also treat wounded insurgents, civilians injured by war actions and a small number of "humanitarian" patients from Balad hospital on a space-available basis – usually children, according to Colonel Hardin.

"The children we see here usually have conditions or injuries that the downtown hospital isn't equipped to handle," said Colonel Hardin. "We can only take humanitarian patients when we have unused beds available, but helping children

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American Red Cross here to serve Balad

By Senior Airman Colleen Wronek
332nd AEW Public Affairs

Balad's American Red Cross team can help servicemembers in times of need.

Open 24 hours, seven days a week in Bldg. 4008, the American Red Cross is here to serve. They answer questions, relay emergency calls, and sometimes give out freebies.

"No one is excluded from having an emergency," said Ms. Leslie Smith, Balad's American Red Cross team leader. "People are usually not prepared and think an emergency isn't going to happen to them or their family."

Ms. Smith said it's important for families back home to know how to contact the Red Cross.

"Sometimes families don't know how to

contact their local Red Cross," she said. "When a family calls the Red Cross, they should give information on the servicemember they are trying to contact."

Information includes the servicemembers deployed unit, address, APO and social security number.

"Sometimes a servicemember will discover there is an emergency back home through someone else," Ms. Smith said. "If that happens, the servicemember should call us so we can verify and relay the message to their commander."

Ms. Smith said the Red Cross provides official verifications to commanders, so commanders can make an informed emergency leave decision.

"We are the only official means of emergency confirmation between a family and a servicemember," Ms. Smith said.

The Red Cross has units all over the Area of Responsibility, including Tikrit, Kuwait and Baghdad.

"We deploy with the military," Ms. Smith said. "We've always been a part of the military and we support them any way we can."

Ms. Smith said the Red Cross isn't a scary place and they have quality of life items.

"We have videos, a VCR, popcorn and freebies people from back home donated," she said. "We're a confidential source and we're here to answer questions and brighten up someone's day."

For more information, or to contact the Red Cross, call DSN 302-538-4439 or e-mail redcross.balad@us.army.mil.

April Promotions

The following Balad Airmen will be promoted during April:

Promoting to Senior Master Sgt.

- Anthony Morikawa, 727th Expeditionary Air Control Squadron

Promoting to Master Sgt.

- James Randall, Detachment 5
- Ted Robinson, 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron

Promoting to Technical Sgt.

- Brian Barbour, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Paul Howells, 332nd EAMXS
- Steven Peters, 332nd EMXS
- Gregory Temple, 34th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron

Promoting to Staff Sgt.

- Adam Bradford, 727th EACS
- Jaclyn Hatchett, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group
- Michael Losinski, 64th Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron
- Maria Rodriguez, 332nd

Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron

Promoting to Senior Airman

- Adam Corchado, 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron
- Erika Rose, 727th EACS
- Christopher Shingles, 64th EAMXS
- Eric Sims, 332nd EMXS
- Jonelle Still, 727th EACS
- Edward Taylor, 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Nicole Wright, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

Promoting to Airman 1st Class

- Michael Castro, 332nd ESFS
- Todd Hendrix, 332nd EMXS
- Kami Parney, 332nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron
- Edward Stengel, 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron

Medic Continued from page 1

is especially rewarding for us and goes a long way toward developing good relationships with local families and villages."

"We really put our hearts into our jobs, and we want our patients to know that we're going to give them the best care possible," said Staff Sgt. Brenda Buchko, an aeromedical technician.

"All our medics are like family," said Colonel Hardin. "Even though the Army evacuation teams don't officially work for me, we work so closely with each other that we all feel like one team."

"As evacuation team members, it's our job to off load patients from the Blackhawks, respond to 911 calls and transport off-base patients to the hospital," said Private 1st Class Dadrion Ellington, a combat medic who works here as part of the Army's Dragon Evacuation Team.

"The best part of our job is helping people," said Private Ellington. "It's important for them to know that we're always just around the corner if they're injured and need to get to the hospital."

"For me, the best part of working here is seeing people smile and say 'thank you' when they're recovering," said Sergeant Buchko. "That makes us smile and forget about our problems."

Even as trauma teams go to work on their latest patients, helicopters lift off outside the hospital and soon disappear from view. More new patients will arrive soon, beginning a new cycle of challenges for the medics at the 332nd EMDG.

CASF in action



Photo by Staff Sgt. Neal Joiner

Members of the 332nd Contingency Aeromedical Staging Facility prepare to lift Senior Airmen Liberty McCray, CASF medical technician, during medical training last month. The CASF is always in need of volunteers to lift litters, talk to patients and help transport patients to the flightline. People interested in volunteering should call 443-7418.

Airmen forecast in unpredictable environment

By Senior Airman Colleen Wronek

332nd AEW Public Affairs

At any location, knowing the weather forecast can be helpful.

It's especially vital in a deployed environment.

Protecting pilots and ground units, members of the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Group Combat Weather team conduct weather observations for the area surrounding Balad.

"We provide weather information for this area and for Army forward operating bases that don't have weather forecasters," said Master Sgt. Todd Grebel, 332nd EOG combat weather team NCOIC.

Sergeant Grebel said the Army does not have weather forecasters.

"The first Air Force combat weather team here rolled in with the Army," said Sergeant Grebel, whose home station is Davis-Monthan AFB, Ariz. "They set up their weather shop in the back of a humvee."

Sergeant Grebel said their team does 90 percent of their business with the Army.

"At the home station, most combat weather teams deal either with the Air Force or the Army," he said. "Here we help everyone. We help Air Force and Army aviation and ground units."

The team takes weather observations, performs air field forecasts, issues weather advisories, watches and warnings, and usually conducts more than 2,200 weather briefings a month.

"Most of the information in our briefings

comes from the weather unit at Shaw AFB, S.C.," Sergeant Grebel said. "We're their eyes forward. The weather team at Shaw takes information we give them and they use their high speed charts to create a forecast. The team at Shaw also produces all the weather forecasts in the Area of Responsibility."

There are some challenges with forecasting in the AOR and Sergeant Grebel said it can be tough.

"We can't pick up information from the Iraqi Weather Service," he said. "There is no long term network data so it makes it harder to forecast and stay ahead of the game."

To check Balad's weather forecast, click on the weather link on the Balad homepage.

Blowing things up is their business

EOD protects people from explosive hazards

By Senior Airman Colleen Wronek
332nd AEW Public Affairs

Putting their lives on the line daily, wearing heavy gear and lifting heavy equipment is what the Air Force Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit does.

They also work with robots, blow things up and have a “blast” doing it.

“I enjoy my job. I get to blow stuff up,” said Senior Airman Chris Johnson, 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron EOD journeyman. “I save peoples lives every day and I get to go outside the wire. The danger aspect of my job is exciting.”

EOD is here to protect servicemembers serving on and off base.

“We’re here to disarm or dispose of explosives,” said Airman Johnson, whose home station is F.E. Warren AFB, Wyo. “We render safe and destroy unexploded ordnances, improvised explosive devices, and we destroy weapons caches.”

If unexploded ordnances are found, Airman Johnson said identify it as a hazard, mark it with something without getting closer to it, such as a ribbon, cordon and clear the area, and call 443-6704 to report it. He also said not to use a hand held radio within 25 feet of the UXO and not to use a vehicle radio within 50 feet.

EOD’s main mission is the flight line, the installation and the surrounding area outside the wire.

“We took over the Army EOD mission,” said Airman 1st Class Isaiah Schaff, 332nd ECES EOD apprentice from Eielson AB, Alaska. “We used to have just the airfield, but now we take any call within the area.”

EOD gets called off-base several times a day for suspected improvised explosive devices.



Photo by Senior Airman Colleen Wronek

Airman 1st Class Isaiah Schaff, 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron explosive ordnance disposal apprentice, shows a common unexploded ordnance found on base. If UXO’s are found identify it as a hazard, mark it with something without getting closer to it, cordon and clear the area, and call 443-6704 to report it.

“We get called off-base daily because patrols find roadside IED’s, weapons caches or random UXO’s,” Airman Johnson said. “After the IED has been disabled or dis-

posed of, we send the components to experts who look for fingerprints and other terrorist

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cell identifiers to see who's building them."

"On one call I went on, there was an IED inside a cow," Airmen Johnson added. "We had to blow up the cow. It's amazing what lengths the enemy will go to harm us."

Some of the tools EOD uses are explosives, bomb suits, and robots.

"We use a lot of C4 explosives and we wear a bomb suit, which is a large Kevlar suit made to withstand a blast and some fragments," Airman Johnson said. "The robot can do a lot of things that would normally put us in mortal danger. It can disassemble IED's, and because it has a camera attached to it, we can use it for reconnaissance and searching the area."

EOD does controlled detonations often, but their main day for detonations is Wednesday.

"We dispose of items found in the Amnesty box every Wednesday," Airman Johnson said. "A lot of times we'll find UXO's days after an alarm red and we'll also dispose of them. One time we were on a demolition operation on our range and we found an unexploded rocket."

Although EOD members put their lives at risk everyday, they said their families understand the importance of their job.

"We are protecting our people from explosive hazards," Airman Schaff said. "If we don't take care of IED's and UXO's, people will die."



Photo by Senior Airman Colleen Wronck

Senior Airman Chris Johnson, 332nd ECES EOD journeyman, demonstrates how "Angela" works, by having the robot hold C4 explosives. EOD's robots can disassemble IED's and perform reconnaissance by searching the area for more hazards.



Photo courtesy of 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron Explosive Ordnance Disposal

A controlled detonation on Balad. EOD schedules controlled detonations every Wednesday.

Job satisfaction at its best

By Lt. Col. Garry Van der Veer
34th Expeditionary Fighter
Squadron commander

What happened on Jan. 30 in Iraq was nothing short of historic. Over two-thirds of the voting population ventured out, literally walking to the polls to cast their first free vote. For the first time in over 50 years the Iraqi people saw the opportunity to shape their country.

The sacrifices of the men and women of the U.S. Armed Forces created the environment to make the national elections and Iraq's future a reality.

And now, here we are two months into our 120-day AEF-3/4 rotation. The 34th Fighter Squadron and 388th Aircraft Maintenance team are providing 24/7 air power to ground forces engaged in day-to-day operations throughout the country of Iraq.

We're a small part of a very large operation. Each day, I am more and more impressed with the level of dedication I see among our Airmen.

The "can do" attitudes, teamwork, and positive mentoring I see daily, from junior enlisted to senior officers, is inspiring. I see a group of individuals who are dedicated to getting the mission done right the first time.

And, knowing we are making a difference for Iraq is why we are driven to do what we do.

The other day at the dining facility I sat down with a young Army specialist. We did the normal "Hey how are you" thing

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Lt. Col. Garry Van der Veer
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and I asked him what he did here.

This specialist is a heavy vehicle operator driving big rigs in convoys to move supplies throughout Iraq. He has a tremendously important job and there is nothing easy about what he is accomplishing on a daily basis.

I admired his enthusiasm about his role here in Iraq and thanked him for his service. In return, he found out that I was the commander of the F-16 fighter squadron on base; he stopped eating, opened his eyes wide, and thanked me for the work our squadron is doing to keep him and his fellow soldiers safe. Talk about job satisfaction!

The pilots flying over Iraq see the fruits of their efforts daily. Successes range from putting precision weapons on target to simply providing overhead coverage for engaged troops on the ground.

The last thing the pilots hear before

returning to base from the ground units; "Thanks for being here for us and have a safe flight back." Simple words from someone right in the thick of things. This is tangible to me, but what about others supporting AEF 3/4?

I had the pleasure of meeting an Air National Guard senior master sergeant whose unit is responsible for dismantling and refitting large convoy vehicles with heavy armor and protective glass.

His Airmen are from all over the world and work as a team for 12-hour shifts with one purpose in mind – preparing those vehicles to ensure our convoys can withstand any insurgent attacks.

Convoy teams stop by his unit frequently to personally thank these Airmen for saving their lives. Again, talk about job satisfaction!

I witnessed the outstanding contributions from the dedicated men and women of the 388th Fighter Wing supporting Operation IRAQI FREEDOM daily: The young crew chiefs and specialists taking pride in their work when that F-16 takes-off down the runway or when the weapon functions as advertised; or the maintenance professional who volunteers his time and expertise to help the Iraqi Air Force standup a new squadron. The life support technicians responsible for each pilot's survival gear and building new survival vests for the new Iraqi Air Force.

These are just a few of the many daily accomplishments. "One team, one fight" – you bet, and this is one team I am proud to be a part of. Job satisfaction at its best.

Got a story?

Know someone in your unit who has a unique story/hobby, or are you interested in writing a story?

Call The Red Tail Flyer at 458-1064 or e-mail:

redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil





PUBLIC HEALTH NOTE

Heat illnesses and injuries

The approaching summer months at Balad can produce temperatures exceeding 120 degrees.

Dehydration, heat exhaustion and heat stroke are common and potentially dangerous heat-related illnesses that can occur if precautions are not taken.

Some basic knowledge of heat injuries can help prevent serious injury or death.

- Dehydration is caused when the body loses more water and electrolytes than it takes in.

- Heat cramps result primarily from excessive loss of salt. Symptoms of heat cramps are severe muscle spasms, pain and weak pulses.

- Heat exhaustion is an acute heat injury due to dehydration and an elevation in body temperature. Common symptoms are profuse sweating, headache, tingling sensations in the extremities, unusual or extreme paleness, difficult breathing, weakness, muscle aches, skin is cool and moist, and rapid pulse rate (120 to 200 beats per minute).

- Heat stroke is a medical emergency. It is when the body loses the ability to cool off through evaporation. The symptoms are exhaustion, confusion, disorientation and hot, flushed (pink to red) dry skin. Coma, convulsions, and/or death can occur if not treated immediately.

Tips to prevent heat injuries:

- Once you are thirsty you are becoming dehydrated.
 - Allow yourself a period of 10-14 days to acclimatize or adapt to a new environment regardless of physical condition.
 - Drink plenty of fluids, especially during outdoor activities. Through sweating, the body can lose more than one quart of water an hour.
 - Replace salts lost with a sports drink or meal
 - Don't exercise vigorously during the hottest time of day. Try to train closer to sunrise or sunset, or in an air conditioned environment.
 - Wear light, loose clothing, such as cotton, so sweat can evaporate.
 - Use a sunscreen to prevent sunburn, which can hinder the skin's ability to cool itself.
 - Wear a hat that provides shade and allows ventilation.
 - Drink plenty of liquids every 15 minutes (drink 16-20 ounces/hour).
 - If you feel your abilities start to diminish, stop activity and try to cool off.
- Don't drink caffeine before exercising because it increases the rate of dehydration.

For more information, call public health at 443-7304.

Meet your neighbor



Senior Airman Armando Pena

Home station: Lackland AFB, Texas

Unit: 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group

Hobbies: I enjoy fishing, sports and traveling

How do you contribute to the mission? I track patients in and out of the hospital. I'm also the liaison between AOR and unit wards.

What is your favorite aspect of this deployment? The best thing is to see patients leave with a smile. They come in injured, but leave with a smile and a thank you.

Besides your family, what do you miss back home? I miss going to Spurs games.

From the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing First Sergeant:

Sandals or shower shoes aren't authorized except in the shower.

Sandals or shower shoes will not be worn outdoors including to and from shower facilities.

Air Force Religious Schedule

Protestant

Sundays:

9 a.m. • Traditional – Hospital
11 a.m. • Contemporary
Worship – Town Hall
5:30 p.m. • Inspirational
Worship – H-6 Chapel

Roman Catholic

Daily:

When Catholic Chaplain is
available, Mass • 7:30 p.m. –
H-6 Chapel
Confessions – Offered prior to
Daily Mass

Saturdays:

7:30 p.m. • Mass – H-6 Chapel

Sundays:

9 a.m. • Mass – H-6 Chapel
2 p.m. • Mass – CJSOTF
Chapel
3:30 p.m. • Mass – JSOAP-AP
Chapel

Latter Day Saints

Sundays:

7 p.m. • Sacraments – H-6
Chapel
8 p.m. • Sunday School – H-6
Chapel

Fellowship and Study

Daily:

8:30 p.m. • Band of Brothers
Fellowship – H-6 Chapel
9 p.m. • Band of Brothers
Prayer – H-6 Chapel

Sundays:

2 p.m. • Protestant Bible Study
– Hospital
7 p.m. • Catholic Study –
Chapel Fellowship room

Tuesdays:

7:30 p.m. • Purpose Driven Life
– Chapel Fellowship room

Wednesdays:

7 p.m. • Purpose Driven Life –
Chapel Fellowship room

Thursdays:

5:30 p.m. • Purpose Driven Life
– Hospital
7 p.m. • Latter Day Saints
Study Group – Chapel
Fellowship room

Fridays:

5 p.m. • Experiencing God–
Chapel Fellowship room
7:30 p.m. • Women's Bible
Study– Hospital

Know what this is?

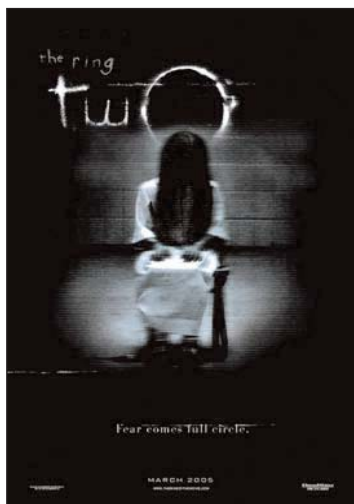


Photo by Staff Sgt. Lindsey Maurice

If you can identify the object, send us an e-mail at redtailflyer@blab.centaf.af.mil. The first person with the correct answer wins a \$5 gift certificate courtesy of the 332nd Expeditionary Services Squadron. Last week's photo of a manhole cover was first identified by Tech. Sgt. Will Rathbun, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Safety.

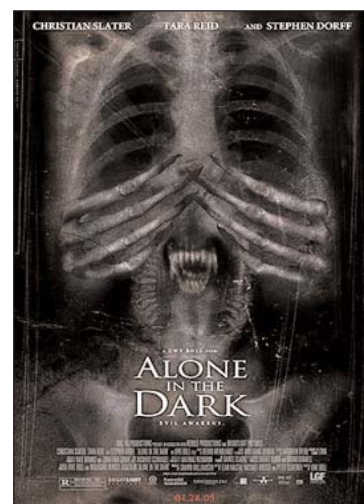
Sustainer Movie Schedule

Schedule is subject to change



Today, April 1
3 p.m. - Hide and Seek
6 p.m. - The Ring 2
9 p.m. - The Ring 2
Saturday, April 2
3 p.m. - The Ring 2
6 p.m. - Alone in the Dark
9 p.m. - Alone in the Dark
Sunday, April 3
3 p.m. - The Wedding Date
6 p.m. - Alone in the Dark
9 p.m. - The Ring 2
Monday, April 4
3 p.m. - White Noise

6 p.m. - Hide and Seek
9 p.m. - In Good Company
Tuesday, April 5
3 p.m. - Assault on Precinct 13
6 p.m. - Coach Carter
9 p.m. - Hide and Seek
Wednesday, April 6
3 p.m. - Saw
6 p.m. - Oceans 12
9 p.m. - The Ring 2
Thursday, April 7
3 p.m. - Team America
6 p.m. - The Ring 2
9 p.m. - Alone in the Dark



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All photos are Air Force photos, unless otherwise indicated.

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